

Message Text

PAGE 01 STATE 104728

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INFO OCT-01 SS-05 ISO-00 /009 R

DRAFTED BY IO/UNP:JFTEFFT:CB

APPROVED BY IO:DMCCLELLAN

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM PRIORITY

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LIMDIS

E.O. 11652:GDS

TAGS: PFOR, UN, XF, SY

SUBJECT: OUTLOOK FOR UNDOF RENEWAL

REF: DAMASCUS 1303(NOTAL); STATE 44646(NOTAL);
USUN 589(NOTAL)

FOLLOWING IS REPEAT OF USUN ,121 QUOTE R 20021137 MAR 76

USMISSION USUN NEWYORK

SUMMARY: IN APPARENT REFINEMENT OF THEIR STRATEGY ON UNDOF
RENEWAL, SYRIANS HERE ARE EMPHASIZING "LINKAGE" BETWEEN
EXTENSION OF FORCE AND PALESTINE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS.

WE BELIEVE THEY MAY HAVE IN MIND PRESSING SECURITY COUNCIL
RESOLUTION COMBINING THE TWO QUESTIONS; IF THE RESOLUTION
WERE VETOED, IT COULD THEN BE REFERRED TO GA UNDER UNITING
FOR PEACE PROCEDURES. WE DISCUSS UN SECRETARIAT VIEWS
ABOUT FORTHCOMING RENEWAL, CONSIDER APPARENT MISCONCEPTIONS
SYRIA AND ISRAEL HAVE OF EACH OTHER'S INTENTIONS, AND
OFFER SOME THOUGHTS ON U.S. POSTURE IN THE MONTHS AHEAD.
END SUMMARY.

1. SYRIAN STRATEGY. SIGNS ARE APPEARING HERE THAT SYRIANS
HAVE BEGUN TO REFINE THEIR STRATEGY IN ANTICIPATION OF
SECRET

PAGE 02 STATE 104728

MAY 31 UNDOF RENEWAL. WHILE DOUBTLESS KEEPING FINAL
OPTIONS OPEN, SYRIANS AT UN ARE FOCUSING DISCUSSION ON

"LINKAGE" BETWEEN UNDOF RENEWAL AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF

TWENTY-MEMBER PALESTINE COMMITTEE CURRENTLY IN SESSION. NATURE OF LINKAGE HAS NOT BEEN PRECISELY DEFINED. BUT PRIVATE AND PUBLIC STATEMENTS LIKE THOSE THAT FOLLOW GIVE AN IDEA OF WHAT SYRIANS SEEM TO HAVE IN MIND:

A) IN A RECENT TALK WITH WALDHEIM, AS DESCRIBED TO US BY USYG URQUHART, AMBASSADOR ALLAF SAID SYRIA "EXPECTED SOMETHING" IN RETURN FOR AGREEING TO CONTINUED PRESENCE OF UNDOF ON ITS TERRITORY. HE ASSERTED THAT A LINKAGE EXISTED BETWEEN REPORT OF PALESTINE COMMITTEE AND UNDOF MANDATE, BOTH OF WHICH WERE TO COME BEFORE SECURITY COUNCIL AROUND JUNE 1. (ALLAF OMITTED TO SAY THAT COMMITTEE REPORT SHOULD, UNDER GA RESOLUTION 3376, BE CONSIDERED AFTER JUNE 1, WHILE MANDATE MUST OF COURSE BE EXTENDED BY MAY 31.) ALLAF CONCLUDED THAT HE WOULD NOT BE SURPRISED IF PALESTINE COMMITTEE PRODUCED RECOMMENDATIONS SIMILAR TO TEXT OF JANUARY RESOLUTION VETOED BY US.

B) IN CORRIDOR DISCUSSIONS, ALLAF HAS ADVOCATED THAT PALESTINE COMMITTEE FINISH ITS WORK IN APRIL SO THAT ITS REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS COULD BE GIVEN SYG BY EARLY MAY. SOME MEMBERS OF PALESTINE COMMITTEE BELIEVE SYRIAN INTENTION IS TO COMBINE UNDOF RENEWAL AND PALESTINE COMMITTEE REPORT IN ONE AGENDA ITEM, WHICH WOULD COME BEFORE SC IN LATE MAY. (SUBSTANTIATING THIS IN SOME MODERATELY RELIABLE SECRETARIAT OFFICIAL THAT ARABS WISH AGENDA ITEM FOR UNDOF RENEWAL DEBATE TO BE ENTITLED "THE MIDDLE EAST PROBLEM INCLUDING THE PALESTINE QUESTION." THIS OF COURSE WAS WORDING OF AGENDA FOR JANUARY DEBATE.)

C) PRIVATELY AND PUBLICLY ALLAF HAS REFERRED TO POSSIBILITY OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION TO CARRY OUT PALESTINE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS IF THESE ARE BLOCKED BY VETO IN SC. CLEAREST ELABORATION OF THIS WAS IN ALLAF'S MARCH 15 ADDRESS TO PALESTINE COMMITTEE (USUN 1022), IN WHICH HE SAID:

SECRET

PAGE 03 STATE 104728

"THE COMMITTEE SHOULD RECOMMEND THAT THE SECURITY COUNCIL ...'GUARANTEE' THE CARRYING OUT OF THE PROPOSED PROGRAMME OF IMPLEMENTATION OF PALESTINIAN RIGHTS, UNDER POSSIBLE ACTION IN ACCORDANCE WITH CHAPTER VII OF THE CHARTER. IN THE NOT-SO-REMOTE CASE THAT THE OBSTRUCTION SHOULD COME FROM THE COUNCIL ITSELF, THROUGH 'ABUSE' OF THE RIGHT OF VETO..., THE COMMITTEE SHOULD RECOMMEND THAT THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY ITSELF CARRY OUT ITS RESPONSIBILITIES IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE UN CHARTER AND WITH PREVIOUS PRECEDENTS."

2. UN SECRETARIAT VIEWS ON RENEWAL.

A) USYG URQUHART RECENTLY SHARED WITH US PRELIMINARY

UN THINKING OF HOW FORTHCOMING RENEWAL SEEMED LIKELY TO DEVELOP. HE THOUGHT THAT AT BOTTOM SYRIA WANTED UNDOF TO REMAIN. SYRIAN INVOLVEMENT IN LEBANON WOULD, HE BELIEVED, INHIBIT EXCESSIVE RISK-TAKING THIS SPRING. BUT HE RECOGNIZED (AS EMBASSY DAMASCUS HAS POINTED OUT) THAT PAST SYRIAN RENEWALS HAVE NOT FOLLOWED A PATTERN AND THAT POTENTIAL FOR LAST MINUTE SURPRISES IS HIGH.

B) URQUHART REPEATED WHAT HE AND WALDHEIM HAVE SAID BEFORE OTHER MANDATE EXTENSIONS: UN WILL NOT KEEP PEACEKEEPING TROOPS ON STATION UNLESS SECURITY COUNCIL TAKES POSITIVE ACTION INDICATING THAT IS ITS WISH. SUCH ACTION, HE SAID, NEED NOT BE FORMAL RESOLUTION BUT COULD BE CONSENSUS STATEMENT BY SC PRESIDENT. (IF NECESSARY, WE BELIEVE SYG WOULD ACCEPT PROCEDURE WHEREBY SC DID NOT OBJECT TO STATEMENT BY HIM THAT HE INTENDED TO MAINTAIN FORCE IN POSITION.) COMMENT: IT IS WORTH RECALLING THAT WHETHER OR NOT SYRIAN AGREEMENT TO EXTENSION IS REQUIRED IN LIGHT OF SYG'S DESCRIPTION OF UNDOF AND ITS TASKS (S/11052/REV.1). ISRAELI AGREEMENT WILL NOT BE REGARDED AS EQUALLY NECESSARY SINCE FORCE IS INSTALLED ON SYRIAN TERRITORY. END COMMENT.

C) AS TO POSSIBILITY OF UNTSO TAKING UNDOF'S PLACE IF MANDATE EXPIRED, URQUHART THOUGHT THIS THEORETICALLY POSSIBLE IF SC AND PARTIES AGREED, BUT SAW LITTLE POINT TO SUCH A MOVE. UNTSO, HE POINTED OUT, WAS COMPOSED OF OFFICERS WITH SIDEARMS WHO WERE NOT DESIGNED OR ABLE TO SERVE AS AN INTERPOSITION FORCE. IF EFFORT WERE MADE TO
SECRET

PAGE 04 STATE 104728

DEPLOY THESE OFFICERS AS A DETERRENT, OR TRIP WIRE, HE DOUBTED WHETHER UNTSO CONTRIBUTING GOVERNMENTS WOULD GIVE THEIR CONSENT. (URQUHART'S COMMENTS WOULD NOT OF COURSE PRECLUDE SYG, ON HIS OWN AUTHORITY, RETURNING UNTSO UNITS TO ESSENTIALLY SAME POSITIONS AND OBSERVER FUNCTIONS AS EXISTED BEFORE GOLAN DISENGAGEMENT AGREEMENT.)

D: URQUHART RECOGNIZED INTENSITY OF ISRAELI DETERMINATION TO PREVENT SYRIAN BLACKMAIL THIS MAY. HE SAID HE HAD CONCLUDED IT WOULD BE UNWISE TO GIVE SYRIA GRATUITOUS OPPORTUNITIES TO ATTACH CONDITIONS TO RENEWAL, AS HAD HAPPENED DURING SYG'S NOVEMBER TRIP TO MIDDLE EAST. IF U.S. SHARED VIEW THAT ANOTHER WALDHEIM TRIP TO AREA WOULD NOT BE HELPFUL, HE HOPED SECRETARY KISSINGER OR AMBASSADOR SCRANTON WOULD CONVEY THIS TO SYG. ACTION REQUESTED: AUTHORITY FOR AMBASSADOR SCRANTON IF THE SECRETARY DOES NOT WISH TO UNDERTAKE THIS TO TRY TO DISUADE WALDHEIM FROM MAKING A PRE-UNDOF RENEWAL MIDDLE EAST TRIP.

3. POSSIBLE SCENARIO FOR MANDATE EXTENSION.

A. THE SCENARIO THAT FOLLOWS ASSUMES THAT NO SIGNIFICANT

PROGRESS - AT LEAST IN SYRIAN EYES - HAS TAKEN PLACE IN PERIOD PRECEDING EXPIRATION OF MANDATE. AS TO WHAT CONSTITUTES "SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS", ALLAF HAS EMPHASIZED TO US THAT SYRIA DOES NOT EXPECT MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN NEXT TWO MONTHS. WHAT PRESIDENT ASAD NEEDS, ALLAF SAID, IS CLEAR SIGN OF FORWARD MOVEMENT IN LIGHT OF PLEDGES LAST NOVEMBER THAT HE WOULD NOT CONSENT TO EXTEND FORCE AGAIN IF MIDDLE EAST SITUATION REMAINED UNCHANGED. ALLAF DID NOT DISMISS END-OF-STATE-OF-WAR TRACK (THOUGH HE WAS SKEPTICAL OF IT,) BUT BELIEVED MOVEMENT IN THIS DIRECTION WOULD HAVE TO BE ACCOMPANIED BY "SOMETHING" FOR PALESTINIANS. THINKING OUT LOUD, HE SUGGESTED ONE POSSIBILITY MIGHT BE UNILATERAL U.S. STATEMENT ON PALESTINE QUESTION THAT BROKE SOME NEW GROUND. HE WAS ALSO INTERESTED IN PRESS SPECULATION (WHICH WE DENIED) OF A POSSIBLE MIDDLE EAST TRIP BY AMBASSADOR SCRANTON.

B. ONE LIKELY SCENARIO, AS WE SEE IT, IS BY WAY OF UNITING
SECRET

PAGE 05 STATE 104728

FOR PEACE PROCEDURE. IT WOULD INVOLVE SEVERAL STEPS:

(1) PALESTINE COMMITTEE WOULD SUBMIT REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO SYG, AND THENCE TO SC, IN APRIL OR EARLY MAY. NON-ALIGNED SC MEMBERS (OR USSR) WOULD PROPOSED THAT COUNCIL CONSIDER REPORT IMMEDIATELY, DESPITE GA RESOLUTION 3375 PROVISION THAT THIS BE DONE AFTER JUNE 1. U.S. COULD OBJECT TO EARLY CONSIDERATION, BUT THERE WOULD BE PRACTICALLY NO POSSIBILITY OF OBTAINING THE SEVEN VOTES NEEDED TO DEFEAT THIS PROCEDURAL MOTION.

(2) NON-ALIGNED WOULD AT SYRIAN REQUEST INTRODUCE RESOLUTION BASED ON PALESTINE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS. THIS WOULD PROBABLY CLOSELY RESEMBLE JANUARY RESOLUTION, WITH ADDITION PERHAPS OF PARAGRAPH EXTENDING MANDATE. U.S. WOULD PRESUMABLY VETO.

(3) NON-ALIGNED WOULD THEN MOVE TO INVOKE UNITING FOR PEACE PROCEDURE CALLING FOR A GA EMERGENCY SPECIAL SESSION (SEE STATE AND USUN REFTELS). IF THIS MOTION DID NOT RECEIVE NINE COUNCIL VOTES (WHICH IT PROBABLY WOULD,) IT WOULD MOST LIKELY RECEIVE SIMPLE MAJORITY OF (73) UN MEMBERS.

(4) GA WOULD THEN ADOPT RESOLUTION THAT HAD BEEN JUST VETOED, INCLUDING PARAGRAPH DECIDING TO EXTEND UNDOF.

(5) WHAT HAPPENED NEXT WOULD DEPEND IN LARGE PART ON ATTITUDES OF SYG, ISRAEL, U.S. AND TROOP CONTRIBUTING GOVERNMENTS. SYG WOULD BE RELUCTANT TO MAINTAIN FORCE BECAUSE OF POSSIBLE CONCERN FOR SAFETY OF TROOPS IF ISRAELI OBJECTIONS WERE TOO MENACING. (TROOP CONTRIBUTORS WOULD IN

VARYING DEGREES SHARE THIS CONCERN.) WALDHEIM WOULD AT SAME TIME NOT WISH TO ANTAGONIZE UN MAJORITY IF IT COULD BE AVOIDED. AS FOR ISRAEL, SHE WOULD ALMOST CERTAINLY DENOUNCE GA ACTION AS ILLEGAL AND SEEK TO DEMAND THAT UNDOF WITHDRAW. (ISRAEL AND THE U.S. MIGHT, ALTERNATIVELY, TAKE THE POSITION THAT THE PART OF THE GA RESOLUTION ACCOMPLISHING THE EXTENSION OF UNDOF WAS VALID, WHILE THE REMAINDER WAS AN UNWARRANTED ASSERTION OF POWERS NOT PROPERLY THE GA'S AND THUS AMOUNTED TO NOTHING MORE THAN STATEMENTS OF GA SECRET

PAGE 06 STATE 104728

OPINION, I.E. RECOMMENDATIONS. HOWEVER, THIS WOULD BE DIFFICULT POSITION FOR U.S. TO ADVANCE IN VIEW OF OUR AUTHORSHIP OF UNITING FOR PEACE PROCEDURE.) IN THE LAST ANALYSIS, WHETHER UNDOF REMAINED WOULD DEPEND PRINCIPALLY ON POSITION OF UNITED STATES, AND ON WHAT IT SAID TO SYG AND ISRAEL.

4. COMMENT:

A. FROM OUR PERSPECTIVE, IT APPEARS ISRAEL AND SYRIA MAY BE HEADED ON A COLLISION COURSE, WITH HIGH RISK OF WAR, IN PART DUE TO WRONG ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT EACH OTHER'S MOTIVES AND INTENTIONS. ISRAELIS HERE ARE CONVINCED SYRIA IS BLUFFING AND DETERMINED THAT ITS BLUFF BE CALLED. WHAT ISRAEL SEES AS PURE AND SIMPLE BLACKMAIL, SYRIA SEES AS REASONABLE EFFORTS TO PROTECT ITSELF AGAINST MILITANT ARAB CHARGES THAT UNDOF IS BEING USED AS A BUFFER AGAINST PROGRESS. SYRIANS, MOREOVER, DO NOT SEEM TO APPRECIATE INTENSITY, AND PERSISTENCE, OF ISRAELI ANGER AT CONDITIONS ATTACHED TO LAST RENEWAL RESOLUTION. BECAUSE OF THIS, SYRIA MAY WELL ASSUME IT CAN PRESS THROUGH POLITICAL CONDITIONS IN MAY WITHOUT INCURRING AN UNACCEPTABLE RISK OF WAR. IT IS ENCOURAGED IN THIS ASSUMPTION BY GENERAL UN SYMPATHY OF UN MEMBERSHIP FOR ITS POSITION, COUPLED WITH A WIDESPREAD NON-ALIGNED WILLINGNESS TO FOLLOW SYRIA/PLO LEAD REGARDLESS OF THE MERITS.

B. IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, WE BELIEVE THERE SHOULD BE TWO MAIN ELEMENTS TO U.S. ROLE PRIOR TO UNDOF RENEWAL. FIRST, U.S. HAS AN EDUCATIVE PART TO PLAY. WE CAN SEE TO IT THAT ISRAEL AND SYRIA UNDERSTAND EACH OTHER BETTER THAN THEY NOW SEEM TO. AND WE CAN ENSURE THAT SECRETARY-GENERAL, SECURITY COUNCIL MEMBERS AND OTHER KEY DELEGATIONS UNDERSTAND IMPORTANCE OF KEEPING UNDOF EXTENSION SEPARATE

FROM THE SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES OF A MIDDLE EAST SETTLEMENT. AMBASSADOR SCRANTON IN HIS INITIAL CALLS WILL BE MAKING THIS POINT. SECOND, IT SEEMS TO US CRITICAL THAT UNITED STATES MAKE A MAJOR EFFORT WITH SYRIA IN COMING TWO MONTHS TO EXPLORE WAYS OF BREAKING MIDDLE EAST DEADLOCK. WE RECOGNIZE THIS IS ALREADY UNDER WAY. WE WISH ONLY TO

SECRET

PAGE 07 STATE 104728

STRESS THAT OUR TALKS HERE PERSUADE US THAT SYRIA'S POSITION
ON UNDOF RENEWAL WILL BE SERIOUSLY AFFECTED BY ITS
PERCEPTION OF U.S. INTENTIONS. BENNETT UNQUOTE. SISCO

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 15 SEP 1999
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: AGREEMENT DRAFT, FOREIGN POLICY POSITION, UNSC RESOLUTIONS, INTERNATIONAL PEACEKEEPING FORCES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 01 MAY 1976
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: izenbei0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976STATE104728
Document Source: ADS
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: IO/UNP:JFTEFFT:CB
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: 11652 GDS
Errors: n/a
Film Number: D760167-0494
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t197605109/baaaeoul.tel
Line Count: 280
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, TEXT ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN IO
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 6
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: izenbei0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05 MAY 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <05 MAY 2004 by buchant0>; APPROVED <26 AUG 2004 by izenbei0>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: OUTLOOK FOR UNDOF RENEWAL
TAGS: PFOR, XF, SY, US, UN
To: STOCKHOLM
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006